Unit 3
Help us return personal effects! Using Instagram posts to search for relatives

❶ **Brief outline and notes for the teacher**

❷ **Worksheet for participants**

❸ **»Instagram Post« template**

❹ **Slide describing »What personal effects mean to families«**

Unit 3
Brief outline and notes
for the teacher

This unit on #StolenMemory enables participants to get involved in the search for relatives themselves with the aim of returning personal effects to their rightful owners. First of all, a video that focuses on a specific case shows what personal effects can mean to families. The video also introduces the participants to an interactive map which shows the places of birth and the last places of residence or last known whereabouts of the owners of the personal effects in the archive. It also shows how participants can use this map and their own Instagram account to support the return campaign themselves (the video can be viewed here: https://vimeo.com/476901588/a6ddbad708). Participants can then get involved directly themselves.

To do so, participants work on their own or with a partner and start off by calling up the interactive map of the owners of the effects. They explore the map and select one of approximately 1,500 markers on the map representing effects that have not yet been returned. The participants can select places they find particularly interesting or places they have a personal connection with. The next step is for the participants to prepare their Instagram post by creating a suitable picture. They might like to make a screenshot of the personal effects they selected or use the template provided to design their own appeal for information and then take a photo of it, for example. They should add a personalized text as a caption and include the name of the place (see worksheet). Participants then upload their post to Instagram. Depending on the time available and their level of motivation, they may create more than one post.

This simple form of digital participation enables participants to play an active role in supporting the search. The hope is that their posts will be viewed by people who live in the places in question and that these people will share them with their own networks or may themselves be able to make contact with the relatives we are trying to trace. The Arolsen Archives regularly publish reports on their website when personal effects are successfully returned to their rightful owners.

To finish off, you can display a selection of quotations that show how much it means to families when personal effects are returned. This can be a good way of leading up to a visit to the exhibition, if such a visit is planned. You might like to use the quotations as a basis for discussing why the Arolsen Archives chose #StolenMemory as the name for the campaign to return personal effects.

Example schedule

1. Introduction, watch the video as a group
🕐 10 minutes

2. Create Instagram posts individually or in pairs
🕐 40 minutes

3. Final phase of the workshop, possibly leading on to a visit to the exhibition
🕐 10 minutes

Methods used
Introduction with video, interactive map, Instagram posts, group discussion

Materials
- Tablet/smartphone for viewing the video and the interactive map
- Layout template for a search appeal
- Participants' own Instagram accounts for publishing the posts
- Slide with quotes from family members

Duration
About 60 minutes, depending on the group
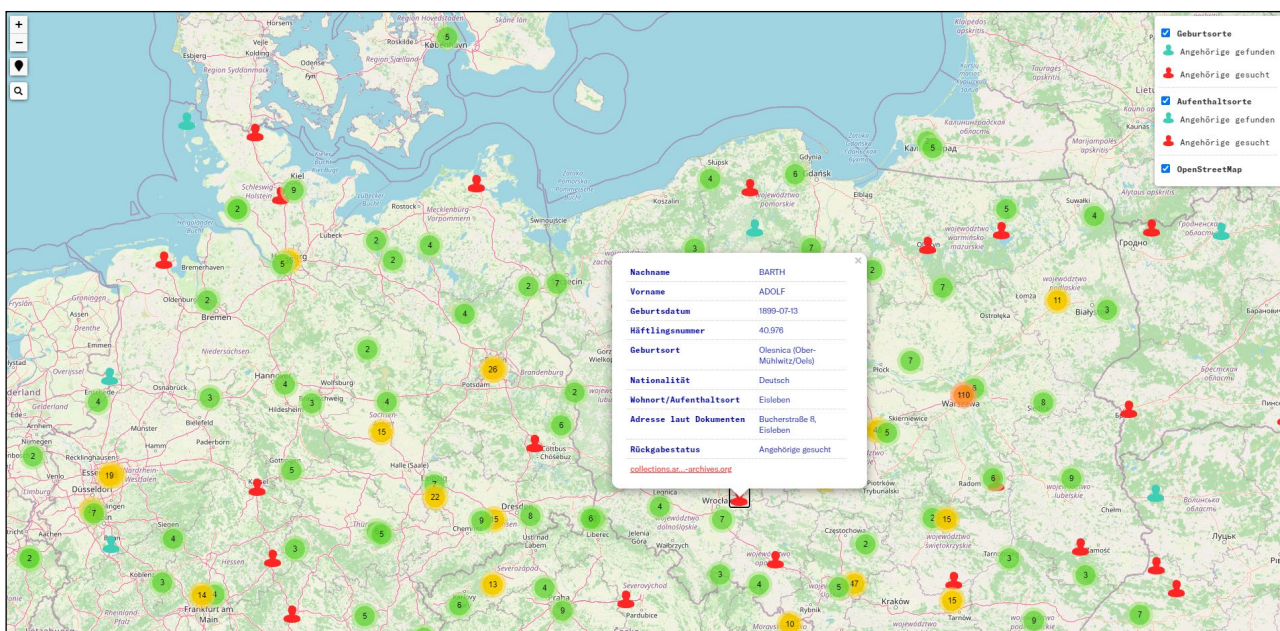
Unit 3
Worksheet for participants
1/2

A tool for tracing relatives: Interactive map of the places of birth and last places of residence of the owners of the personal effects

https://arolsen-archives.org/map-stolenmemory/

You can help search for relatives yourselves! It's easy to join in with your Instagram account! The hope is that other people will see your posts and share them with their own networks or put the Arolsen Archives in touch with the relatives we are trying to trace. The key to achieving this is to publish the names of the owners of the personal effects in combination with their place of birth or the place where they lived. The following instructions explain exactly how this works.

❶ Use the link/QR code to access the interactive map which contains markers showing the places of birth and the last places of residence of the owners of the personal effects in the archive. Each marker contains a link to the online archive of the Arolsen Archives, where you can see the personal effects themselves. On the map, select a set of effects that have not yet been returned. You can choose personal effects from places which interest you or from places you have a personal connection with: perhaps you live nearby, or have been there on holiday, or maybe you have a friend who lives there…

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❷ Now you can create the pictures for your Instagram search appeal. You can make a screenshot or take a photo of the effects in the online archive. Alternatively, you can use the template to write your own appeal for information and then take a photo of it – as a close-up with yourself in the background or however you like it best!

❸ Now write a caption. You can write a simple appeal for information and/or formulate your own text as a mark of remembrance! It is important to include the person's name and to prefix the place name with a #. Only then will your post be shown to all the people who are looking for that hashtag or who have subscribed to it - these are the people we want to reach with our posts because many of them will live in the place or at least know their way around there - and they may well know someone with the same surname! If you add @arolsenarchives, we will receive your search appeals and share them on our channels.

If your post is about someone from Germany, write the caption in German. If your post is about someone from another country, it's best to use English - or the local language, of course, if you speak it.

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❹ Post the image with the caption in your Instagram feed - that's better than posting it in a story, as the post will be visible for more than one day and the chances of success are higher! If you have time, repeat the steps again to create a post for another person!

Each post should include the following elements:

❶ First and last name of the owner of the personal effects
❷ Place of birth or place residence with a #
❸ #StolenMemory
❹ @arolsenarchives

#StolenMemory

Unit 3
What personal effects mean to families

> »It means a lot to me and especially to my mother. She was in tears again and was reminded of those terrible years. She will never be able to forgive the Germans for what they did to her, to her family, and to her country. But she also understands that we now have a different Germany and a different generation of Germans. It is wonderful to see that even after so many years, so many people, so many Germans, are still looking for relatives of the victims to give them back memories of their loved ones. As you know, my mother had a photo of her brother, and thanks to you, she now has a whole box full of memories. We both want to thank you for all the work you have done and are still doing for our family and for many others.«

Johannes Berens's nephew, 2020.
Johannes Berens died shortly after liberation in May 1945 as a consequence of the time he spent as a prisoner in various sub-camps of Neuengamme concentration camp.

> »It brings back the memory of those whose fate during the war was so tragic that it is hard for us to imagine today. For the relatives, these few remaining objects are treasures of inestimable value. [...] Thanks to the documents we have received from you, we now know that our uncle has a grave and we know where it is [...] We would like to thank you for all the careful, patient work you do – for conducting all the necessary research, for keeping the memories of the concentration camp victims alive, for clarifying their fates, for finding out where and how they died, and for searching for their families.«

Kazimierz Biel's niece, 2018.
Kazimierz Biel was a prisoner in Neuengamme concentration camp and died in May 1945 when the »Cap Arcona« ship was bombed in the Bay of Lübeck.

> »My name is Yves Stappers and I am Edmond Ameye's grandson. He was arrested by the Gestapo in '44 because of his work with the Resistance. [...] The object we got back from him [...] is a watch. That in itself is quite extraordinary. And the fact that it comes back to us today, from someone who has sacrificed his life for freedom. It returns at a time when so many freedoms are being challenged, both in neighboring countries, but also here in Belgium. The growth of nationalism, the rapid rise of the extreme right – personally, it sends shivers down my spine. Today, this watch is a testimony of its time. For our children, it revives memories that must be brought back to life, especially in the current moment.«

Edmond Ameye's grandson, 2019.
Edmond Ameye was imprisoned in Neuengamme concentration camp and died in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in the spring of 1945 after a death march.